May 1988

Depot Town Rag

FREE 100% RAG CONTENT

A PUBLICATION OF THE DEPOT TOWN ASSOCIATION, INC. The Caboose, 400 Market Place, Ypsilanti, Michigan 48198

Special guest - The Tall Texan, Billy Walker and the Tennessee Walkers

Nashville's famed Billy Walker, a member of the Grand Ole Opry since 1960, will be the featured artist at the May 28th Ypsi Opry in Ypsilanti's historic Depot Town. Courtesy of MCA/DOT records and Tall Texan Productions, of Hendersonville, Tennessee, Billy Walker and his Tennessee Walkers will bring his nearly three dozen Top-10 hits to the Depot Town stage for a spectacular review of the very best of the tradition of popular country music.

With a long history and great status as one country radio's most consistently programmed artists, Billy Walker's biggest tunes, "Charlie's Shoes," "Funny How Time Slips Away," and "Cross the Brazos At Waco," can be found in brand new recordings on Dot's recent issue of *Billy Walker*.

For fans of Walkers' Mexican-flavored "Brazos" style, "Coffee Brown Eyes" provides classic cowboy romance. The "Tall Texan" stretches out and unwinds on ballads like "Someone Left The Light On In Your Eyes," and though he claims in one song to be "Singing Those Lovesick Blues Again," he does it in such an infectiously happy way that by the good-time "Am I Blue" we're sure that Billy Walker is anything but.

Walker and his group will be presenting all these hits and more in the Ypsilanti/Depot Town Freight House on May 28th, to highlight an exciting evening of traditional country classics featuring the best in country western music and dancing.

Although Walker is a special guest artist for the May 28th event, he will be received by local fans as an old and much-loved friend. As a youngster in Ralls, Texas, Billy Walker was dealt a very tough hand. His mother died when he was four, and he spent three years in the Waco Methodist Orpahan's Home while his father struggled to support the large family on Depression-era wages. When Herbert Walker re-married, there were a total of twelve children to feed. Still, there was love and there was faith. Billy gained his first singing experience in a gospel quartet with his father, stepmother, and a family friend.

In high school, Billy Walker was an All-Regional basketball star, AND the star of his own weekly radio show. The fifteen-minute slot on KICA in Clovis, New Mexico came with his first-place win in a talent contest, and for two years Billy hitch-hiked the fifty miles to Clovis and then back again in time for school each week. When rides were slow, it was not unusual for him to run ten miles or more of the way.

After graduation, Billy joined the band of Columbia recording artist Jimmy Lawson ("Foggy River") as a guitarist and vocalist. Later, he led a trio in San Angelo, Texas before

Continued on page 3

Depot Town & Country
YPSI OPRY
tradition
of Nashville North
Saturday, 28 May 1988

6:30 pm	Barbecue dinner available (inexpensive)
7:00 pm	Master of Ceremonies, WSDS' **Country Dan The Southern Bullet Band**
8:00 pm	**Billy Walker & the Tennessee Walkers**
9:45 pm	**Country Class** dancers in exhibition with the Southern Bullet Band
11 - 12:30 am	**Billy Walker** dance/concert Cash bar and snacks all night long

Desperately seeking volunteers

for the May 28 Ypsi Opry concert! Tend bar? Sell tickets? Stamp hands? Clean up? We need you! The concert shifts start at 6:30 p.m. and 9:30 p.m.; the concert lasts until 12:30 a.m. Work a three-hour shift, and enjoy the rest of the show free! Do you like country music? Do you like Depot Town? Do you like both? Call and offer a helping hand. 482-3463.

Things have to get worse before they get better department:

Almost every summer in the last decade has seen some access to Depot Town closed off for serious construction. You'll need two hands to count them: the street and sidewalk paving, lighting installation, railroad crossing installation, new track installed, park improvements, bridge construction, parking lot development and 'tridge' installation.

Now it's the Michigan Avenue access which will be blocked for a good part of the summer—and the Superior Township access will soon follow.

River Street's rehabilitation and paving has already begun and the project is promised to be completed by Heritage Festival weekend at the end of August. Included in the paving project will be new curbs and curb cuts for driveways, street widening, improved access to the MCRR depot restaurant, new street-side parking layouts and a signalled cross-walk at River and Cross Streets. Final clean up will occur in the fall.

Next winter, you can look for us at the corner of 'Walk' and 'Don't Walk.' Ironically, the highway planners could not figure how to direct pedestrian traffic from Miller Motors to the Sidetrack, and that crossing will not be signalled. The other three crossing patterns were easier to install and will go ahead as planned. But the street-railroad-street crossing was more than they could handle in this project. Maybe some of Depot Town's creativity will rub off on them while they're here this summer?

Heritage Fest planning under way

Getting ready to celebrate it's tenth anniversary, the Ypsilanti Heritage Festival planning committee has already begun to put things into place for the August 26, 27, 28 celebration of Our Town's past. The event began as a sidewalk expo centered, mainly, in Depot Town, but has grown to encompass Depot Town, Frog Island, Riverside Park and other areas of the community. Last year's Festival drew more than 300,000 people, in contrast to 35,000 in attendance the first year.

Depot Towners heading local committees include the following who seek the aid and comfort of our neighbors and readers to make the tenth anniversary the best, ever --

☐ Farm toy show, antique autos, early engines, fire engines, just about everything that's on wheels - Jack Miller

☐ Horseshoe pitching contest - Ike Rednour

☐ Promotion and publicity, radio, TV, magazine and newspaper contacts, posters, flyers, distribution, - Carolyn McKeever

☐ Heritage Jazz Competition (DTA will run the beer tent) - WEMU's Jim Dulzo

☐ Arts & Crafts exhibitors - Tom Dodd

All are invited to attend the planning sessions which continue at 5:15 p.m. every Thursday in the Chamber of Commerce meeting room (upstairs at the back of the Breakey Mansion at 125 North Huron at Washtenaw). Here's an excellent opportunity to see the inside of our Chamber's new home. And there's plenty of work to be done between now and the opening of the tenth annual Heritage Festival. Don't miss this excellent opportunity to make Ypsilanti look great for all those people who aren't lucky enough to live here!

The Commercial Italianate Architectural Style
— in Ypsilanti's Nineteenth Century Depot Town

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Part Five: **Stone Quoins at the Corners**

The Italianate style of Victorian architecture borrowed many elements from other styles and most of them found their way to Depot Town. Quoined corners, however, are not the most prevalent characteristic, and we're just lucky to have *any* examples down in this old railroad district, its never ostentatious, the brick commercial structures found in this neighborhood were pure working-man's utilitarian-style commerical buildings, and the quoined details found at the corners of Hansen's building are fancier than this old block probably deserves.

The sandstone blocks facing the corners and center entrance around Cross Street Antiques, Serenity House and Standard Printing are the only example to be found in Depot Town. If fact, as you walk by the more affluent environs of Ypsilanti's Historic District, you might expect to find more of these blocks which were often used to give a sense of majesty and importance to just such a cubic structure.

Some quoined corners were solid blocks, like that illustrated here, but many others fashioned quoins from masses of brick. Still others were fabricated of wooden boards, with beveled edges, applied to the wall in a manner to suggest solid blocks of stone. All these treatments served to give a massive, imposing form to the corners of these palace-like sturctures.

But no, you won't find quoins on Old Town Hall or the Ladies' Library as you might expect. Grand as these edifices were, they left their walls plain at the corners. All their detail was left to the horizontal effect of the 'French curb,' the cornice and the roof line.

The only other quoins found in Ypsilanti are on the Eastern Michigan University campus. Ford and Boone Halls call out their orderliness to the West Cross Street traffic through the contrast of white stone quoins against the red brick walls of the rest of the two buildings.

First-time edifice complexers often refer to quoins as 'corner stones,' and, in a way, they are. But a true corner stone is only found once in a building. Corner stones were placed in a conspicuous front corner of important buildings, often with the date of construction carved into it. Terribly official corner stones, at such places as city halls, courthouses and banks, often had a hollowed-out section in which was placed memorabilia pertaining to the building's construction and original occupants. Many of these were uncovered during the 1960's Urban Renewal schemes and we only hope the contents were placed in the local historical museums -- but we doubt it.

We've never found a true cornerstone in Depot Town, even at the Follett House, which housed the precursor of Bank One-National Bank of Ypsilanti -- Benjamin Follett's bank, which was described as the 'safest bank in the Michigan Territory.' Maybe they didn't think it would ever get to be that important.

James Mitchener, in his epic tale, *Hawaii,* told of the missionaries working to convince the 'natives' that they needn't bury a human sacrifice at the bottom of *each* of the four corners of their pole buildings. They settled for burying just one per building for good luck. (The buildings' luck, not the victim's.) Depot Town's ancient edifices give us little evidence of such ritualism, but the quoins on our one, central, example harken back to an ancient architectural style.

Next month: **Window caps and rows -** in the Italianate tradition. Here's looking at *you,* Leonardo.

Aubree's Saloon & Second Floor
39 East Cross

Old Town Restaurant
Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
38 East Cross

The Cricket Box
19 East Cross Street
Ypsilanti, Michigan 48198
(313) 487-5595

Depot Doo
Fine Design in Hair Style
25 East Cross • 484-3045

Cooking Encounters at the Co-op

Every second Saturday of the month, the Co-op continues to offer "Cooking Encounters;" an informal way to experiment with whole foods. There are so many different foods available at the Co-op that you may be passing something by because you are not sure what it is, or how to use it (or you just have not noticed it yet).

Even folks who have been around for a while can use recipe ideas, or may welcome an opportunity to sample a recipe they haven't had the time to try yet. The Co-op is not just a food store. One of our purposes is education. Please let us know your food education needs, and we will try to respond.

The next cooking encounter will be about OAT BRAN. This great discovery not only promises to lower cholesterol, but it also tastes great and can be used in quite a variety of ways. Stop by the Co-op on **Saturday, May 14** (10 a.m. - 4 p.m.) and give it a try.

Ypsilanti Recycling Project Activities

Michigan Recycle Week

Michigan Recycle Week is May 1 through 7 and, in celebration, the Ypsilanti Recycling Project is sponsoring its annual tree giveaway. On Saturday, May 7, from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m., the first 250 visitors to the Recycling Center, located at 651 Rice (just north of the Farmers' Market, in the Frog Island parking lot) will receive a free tree seedling. Varieties available include red pine, Norway spruce and silky dogwood. Only one per patron, so come early.

Also that day, the Recycling Project will be holding a free drawing for two $25 gift certificates good for nursery stock. Entrants need not be present to win, but must come by to fill out an entry form. As long as you're there, get into the spirit of Recycle Week and bring your old newspapers, glass and tin cans in for recycling.

There'll be activities for the children, too, on April 30 and May 7 and the Farmers' Market Freight House from 9 a.m. to noon with recylced crafts workshops. Kids can learn how to put old magazines, cereal and detergent boxes and toilet paper tubes by the Farmers' Market on those days.

Call 482-3463 for more information.

YPSILANTI RECYCLING PROJECT

651 Rice Street
(just north of the Farmers' Market in Ypsilanti's historic Depot Town)
Open every Saturday
9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Collecting newspaper, glass, used motor oil and ferrous cans
A non-profit organization

YPSI OPRY

Continued form page one

joining up with the already famous Hank Thompson as a part-time front man. He began to make his way up the ladder of the great country radio shows, first as "The Traveling Texan, Masked Singer of Country Songs" on the Big D Jamboree, then on to the Louisiana Hayride with Webb Pierce, Faron Young and Elvis Presley.

Billy Walker inked his first recording contract with Columbia in 1951, and in '52 scored his first big hit with "Anything Your Heart Desires." As the hits kept coming, he became a regular for three years on Red Foley's "Ozark Jubilee," which was nationally televised on ABC-TV. He also hosted his own syndicated TV series, "Billy Walker's Country Carnival."

His Ypsilanti Freight House appearance could be the kick-off of a series of classic country concerts, says Depot Town Association president, Tom Dodd. "If this event proves as popular as we think, we could see a whole new series of monthly events in this tradition next winter," says Dodd. "Billy Walker has the artistic integrity and record of top quality to give this series just the right kind of send-off."

The 'house band' - The Southern Bullet Band

Well known to lovers of traditional and classic country music in the area, virtually all the Southern Bullet Band has been seen playing and singing with other groups in the metropolitan Detroit area over the last fifteen years.

The dancers - Country Class

Country folk have found a home in Southeastern Michigan since they came up to work in the plants for the war effort of the 1940's. After they won World War II, they stayed and added their tradition of warmth and genuine friendliness to these cold northern climes. The Country Class dancers have organized to continue this rich culture and, thought their specialty of line-dancing, reflect the rich heritage or motion and rhythm from the country and western dance music tradition.

Master of Ceremonies, 'Country Dan' —

Presenting Ypsilanti's "Mr. Country Music" himself, **Country Dan,** of radio station WSDS. The popular radio personality will host the many performing artists live - on stage - and renew his acquaintance, in person, with his loyal listening audience. Long and respected entrepreneur of the medium, Country Dan is the perfect host for this landmark musical event.

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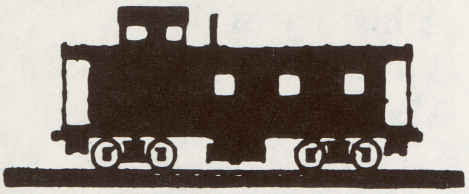
Expires June 18th



D.T.A. 21 April 1988

Guests - Steve Darnell of the Ypsilanti Food Co-op. Steve reported to the D.T.A. on the Ypsilanti Co-op's active and involved general membership and board of directors, who make the Co-op a growing and exciting organization. Along with publishing the Co-op's monthly newsletter (free), the group is holding a series of "Cooking Encounters," from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. on the 2nd Saturday of each month, focusing on seasonal treats and nutrition information. The "Nutrition Caution" is compiling a cookbook and calls for recipes to be submited to the Co-op @ 312 N. River in time for pre-publication sampling.

The co-op's annual meeting on May 15 is open to the public and will feature speakers and a pot-luck dinner.

17 March 1988 minutes approved and published.

Treasurer's report - $3724.95 in general fund.

Membership/Volunteerism - Bonni Rosen is still looking for a few good volunteers for Ypsi Opry's first show May 28th. Come and see the show and help make it a success. Contact Bonni @ 482-FINE. Thanks to those sending in their paid memberships.

Caboose - Distinctive rental at a bargain price - $25 per event with a $10 key deposit. Contact Gary McKeever @ 483-4245.

Budget/Events - Carolyn McKeever was sorry to report that, for the first time in five years a jazz series concert lost money, probably dut to competition from many area shows. Thanks to our dedicated volunteers for a great show of support throughout the series.

- Now get ready for Ypsi Opry, featuring Nashville's Billy Walker, with the Southern Bullet Band, and Texas line-dancers. Carolyn reports advertising is on the way to the printers; and will be featured on WSDS radio.

— Frog Island planning is also underway (see executive committee report.)

2nd Vice Presidents —

Merchants - Paul Fetters reports that an artists' rendering and presentation of architectural, walkway and roadway lighting plan for Depot Town is underway.

Artists & Artisans - no report

Antique dealers - no report.

Engineering Society - Contact the Engineering Society for that spring clean-up or any job undone. Kids willing to work @ The Old Caboose, 400 Market Place, Ypsilanti, MI 48198.

Antique Engine Club - no report.

Foundation - Alex and Maribell Suczek offer an invitation to the Foundation's meeting Thursday, May 5th. The Foundation explores our historic environments, it's rehabilitation development.

Best Yet Award - Ike Rednour, the barber, for parking in the back lot and walking for the customer's street parking convenience. Others take note.

The Golden Goose Award - motorized clowns of Frog Island and our pedestrian *foot* bridge.

Other Busienss - A motion was made and passed to have executive board members meet and take action on issues relating to the budgeting of events.

Executive Committee Report - In order to clarify the use of moneys in coorperative events, DTA president, Tom Dodd, is developing a line item breakdown of costs incurred by both DTA and it's event co-sponsors. This budgeting method will also prove helpful in staging events sponsored soley by the DTA.

- A proposal was made to assign a line item and dollar value to volunteer's for their time, which would allow our volunteers a tax credit for donating to a non-profit organizations.

May 1988

for the good of the block

Artists & Artisans
7:30 p.m. Monday 5/2
Caboose

Foundation
8:00 p.m. 5/5
Caboose

Association
7:30 p.m. Thursday 5/19
Caboose

Antique Engine Club
7:30 p.m. Thursday 5/26
Freight House

THE DEPOT TOWN RAG:

A publication of the Depot Town Association, Inc., a nonprofit, tax-exempt corporation dedicated to preserving the unique character of the neighborhood and to the enhancement of its business climate.

The Depot Town Association, Inc.,
Tom Dodd, President
The Caboose, 400 Market Place
Ypsilanti, Michigan 48198

Pronto Pizza
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Ypsilanti, MI 48198
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Patronize The Merchants That Bring You The
****
Depot Town Rag
****

Fast tracks in the railroad district

Recent switches in the old rail yard —

☐ Margaret Harner, of the **Teachers' Shop & Learning Center** (520 West Cross) next to the EMU campus, has purchased the **Heritage Square** complex from Rosemary and Norm Lawson and will move her highly successful school business to the Grand Trunk space. In addition to the Teachers' Shop, Heritage Square also includes The Vitamin Shoppe, T.H.E. Store and Kelly Services. Margaret's long experience in this very specialized service/business will make a great contribution to the district.

☐ Tim Wise and Joe Golder, long active in Depot Town events of magical performances and farm produce, have opened **"The Mean Bean"** in the former Paponetti's Pasta place. They will specialize in Mexican food take-outs and sidewalk fare. Their local loyalty and broad expertise bring a pair of unique talents to the district's tradition of food services and creativity.

☐ **The Cricket Box** will be closing this month. Theirs was an elegant shop in each of the two locations during their tenure in the district. Their neighbors wish Marge, Dave, Molly and Russ all good luck in their future endeavors. They have certainly made their mark in their few year's stay in the district.

☐ Corinne Sikorsky and other principals of the **Ypsilanti Food Co-op** on River Street are involved in intense negotiations to take over the **Millworks Building,** where their enterprise has been paying rent for the past several years.

He started out here

Hostage, Terry Anderson, was once assigned to Depot Town stories when he worked at *The Ypsilanti Press.* He later went to write for the *Associated Press* in Detroit, Washington and the foreign bureau. Maybe, someday, he'll be back with us.

City Body, Inc.

20 East Cross

Front Alignments
Special - **$24.95**

Big Bob's Magazines
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50 East Cross 485-4930

It's an annual tradition

The planters are ready

Don Steindorf, from the City of Ypsilanti's Department of Public Works, has moved new dirt to the street-side planters in preparation for spring planting. Now it's time for the next step. Remember - the planters don't necessarily have to be cared for by those closest at hand. (Why, if that were the case, the folks in between the planters would never get a chance to beautify block!)

Not counting moveable barrels, observers say there are fourteen planting beds in Depot Town. If you haven't planted one in the last decade, it's probably your turn! And if you just *loved* doing it before, you'll probably want to plant one again. It's much appreciated by our clientele. Out-of-(depot)-towners proclaim their beauty and uniqueness every season. Bounteous blossoming beds of blooms have become yet another Depot Town tradition.

Petunia Planting Party

Join your neighbors on North Huron Street at 10 a.m. Saturday, May 14th for the annual Petunia Planting Party from Pearl Street to Cross. It's one of the most impressive entrances to Depot Town.

Railroadiana on display

A display of photos from the nineteen forties will be on display in the Freight House on a rotating basis for the next several weeks. The prints, along with a study guide for teachers, was a promotional piece from the railroad industry during World War II and was in the collection of Cathy Jenkins, who donated them to DTA.

Like so many jazz concert conversations, this one looked like just another of those "my grandpa used to work for the rialroad" reminiscences, but Cathy remembered the talk and sent the delightful packet to us here in Depot Town.

Farmers' Market manager, Gary Urick was happy to add them to his constantly growing display of railroad art and history and will exhibit them in small portions from now on. Ask to see the teachers' guides, too. It's an authentic promotional record of an industry from another era.

Thanks, Cathy. We always like to hear those steam whistles blow, even if it's only in our imagination.

Jim MacDonald's Antiques
Apple Annie's
Vintage Clothing
29 East Cross • 481-0555

A history of the Ypsilanti High School Machine Shop

(From Andy Smith, as told to Bob Chadwick)

A Mr. Dickerson taught machine shop in the '20's and '30's. His classes made gas engines from castings poured at the 'Gray Iron Foundry' which was located in Depot Town. These engines were not models, but had eight-inch flywheels. There also was a teacher named Mr. Young who built an airplane in the shop and he flew it in 1926.

Steve Clark's father took machine shop in 1945 and 1946. His teacher was Mr. Macmurray. He built a floor model drill press with castings from the same foundry. Mr. Clark remembers several file cabinets filled with project plans drawn by Young and Dickerson. An example of Mr. Dickerson's engine has been located in Monroe. Unfortunately, it is not for sale.

We would like to find out some of the history of the machine shop, who were the teachers and what kinds of projects the students built. Where was the Gray Iron Foundry located? Does anyone have old photos of the shop which we could copy? Does anyone have any of the project prints, especially prints of the engines? We would like to make patterns and pour some castings, resurrecting this old project. — Dave Bloom (663-8854).

Vintage autos for sale in Depot Town

Jack Miller has been making a great deal of good news via print and video signal lately, but those promos usually just point out that Jack is in the business of preserving old Hudsons. They show the old advertising and the displays of chrome labeled 'Hornet' and 'Hollywood', but they haven't told the whole story.

They haven't told the real news -- the fact that you can still buy '57 Chevys and Pink Caddies at Miller Motors. Other vintage models are also for sale -- in the form of die-cast scale models, along with a complete line of scale model farm toys.

With a showroom so historic and authentic, some people wonder if it's the plaything of some rich eccentric or really a commercial space with something to sell. Well, now the average tourist and antique shopper can afford to buy something at Miller Motors. Stop in and see Jack's new display cases filled with scale models of dream machines of the past.

As in the last five decades in Depot Town, Jack is still on hand to talk about the superiority of the Hudson automobile, too. He continues to stock full-scale examples in the dealership. Some things never change.

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Good Food, Good Drinks,
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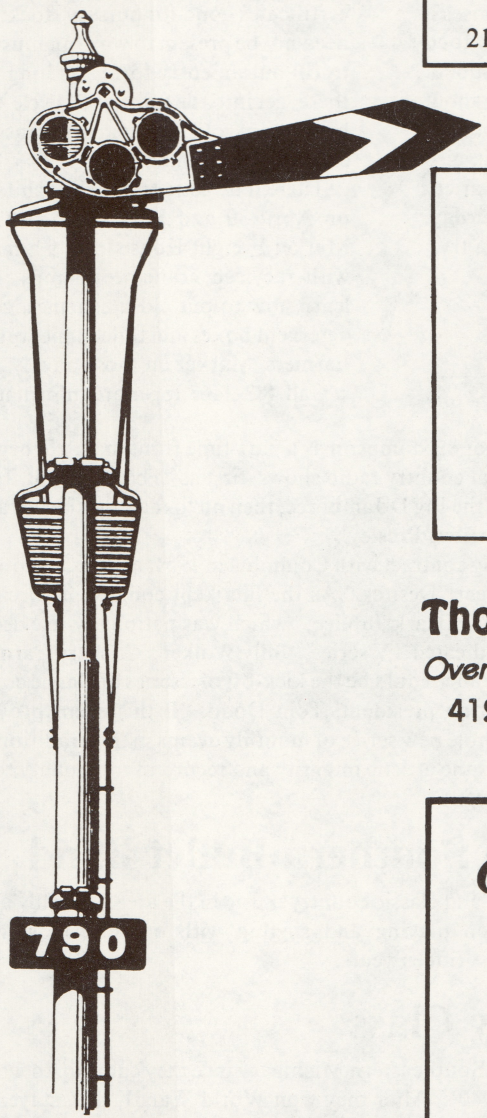

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